also sent for Hindi translation. Once Hindi translation is ready, the requisite number of copies of the report in both English and Hindi are prepared for laying it on the Tables of the two Houses of the Parliament. Now, the requisite number of copies of the aforesaid Reports (in both Hindi and English) are ready and proposed to be laid on the Table of the House on 25.11.2002.

Transfer of cases on service matters to Lok Adalats

106. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to transfer all cases on service matters from High Courts to permanent Lok Adalats being set up to clear the huge backlog of cases;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the fresh steps taken to fill the vacancies of Judges in the High Courts which are hovering around 145 at present?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. JANA KRISHNAMURTHY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) As on November 13, 2002, against the approved Judge strength of 647 (including 43 new posts) of the High Courts, there were 499 Judges in position leaving 148 posts vacant.

The Government has been requesting the Chief Justices of High Courts, Chief Ministers and the Governors of the States, from time to time, to initiate proposals for filling up of the existing vacancies and those expected to arise, as early as possible but at least six months before the occurrence of the vacancies. They were requested last on October 28, 2002 to make recommendation for filling up the vacancies expeditiously.

Suggestion of CJI on pending cases in courts

107. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chief Justice of India has suggested that arrears in courts continue to pose a serious problem and mooted the idea of compulsorily sending cases pending for more than 10 to 15 years to Lok Adalats;

(b) if so, whether any steps have been taken in this regard;

(c) if so, the total Lok Adalats at present in operation;

(d) the cases that have been forwarded to them; and

(e) to what extent these Lok Adalats have reduced the arrears in courts?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. JANA KRISHNAMURTHY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) to (e) So far, 1.43 crore cases have been amicably settled through Lok Adalats. In Motor Accident Claims Cases, compensation amounting to over Rs. 3615 crores has been awarded.

Strategy to improve the working of major ports

108. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether any strategy has been adopted to improve the working of major ports and to reduce costs in various areas of operation by Government and at Port level;

(b) if so, the details thereof, port-wise; and

(c) the results achieved in each port during the last three years; year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI Su. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) and (b) Improvement in the working of major ports is a continuous process. A campaign has been launched to reduce cost in various areas of Port operations and improve the working of Major Ports. For this, suggestions for reducing cost from different quarter including Port User, Chamber of Commerce & Industry have been received. Various operating areas at all Major Ports like consumption of fuel and